



For Immediate Release

Contact: Ronald Gault

Archigram: Experimental Architecture, 1961-74

March 12 - April 25, 1998

Press Preview: Wednesday, March 11, 1998, 11am

Panel discussion: Saturday, March 14, 1998, 3pm

StoreFront for Art & Architecture, in conjunction with the architectural programs of Pratt Institute, Columbia and Cornell Universities, and Thread Waxing Space, presents the first ever major American exhibition on the visionary English architectural collaborative, Archigram. **Archigram: Experimental Architecture, 1961-74** includes over 400 drawings, models, multi-media installations, magazines and recreated environments.

During the 1960s and early '70s, Warren Chalk, Peter Cook, Dennis Crompton, David Greene, Ron Herron and Michael Webb, came together to produce Archigram Magazine (from ARCHitectural teleGRAM), which challenged mainstream publications and ideas with radical alternatives to cities, houses and architectural archetypes. They drew inspiration from a variety of contemporary sources, including space travel, science fiction, the Beatles and underground culture, for their Walking Cities, Plug-In environments and Capsule structures. These projects had repercussions on subsequent avant-garde architecture and art in Europe, the United States and Japan.

The majority of the exhibition will be in Thread Waxing Space's 5,000+ sq. ft. gallery, with additional selections at StoreFront. We will be hosting the video portion of the exhibition presenting the work of Ron Herron. Columbia's Ross Gallery and Cornell University will have selections of work as well.

A 168-page catalogue, designed by Archigramer Dennis Crompton, has been produced. In addition to documenting many of the group's projects, it includes text by Barry Curtis, William Menking and Michael Sorkin.

A panel discussion, with Pratt professor William Menking, architecture curator Mildred Friedman, Columbia professor Graham Shane, and writer and *New York Times* columnist Andrea Codrington will precede the public reception. Archigramers Peter Cook, Dennis Crompton, David Greene and Michael Webb will answer questions at the panel.

This exhibition has been made possible by support from The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, The British Council, Ove Arup & Partners, USA., Polshek & Partners Architects, Lee/Timchula Architects, Francois de Menil Architect PC, Theo. David & Associates, Richard Gluckman Architects, Guinness Import Co. (Bass Ale), Clicquot, Inc, and public funds from The New York State Council on the Arts.

Archigram 1961-74 Exhibition Description

From March 12 through April 25, 1998, Thread Waxing Space will present *Archigram 1961-74*, a major exhibition (4,000+ sq. ft.) of drawings, posters, ephemera, maquettes and large scale installations that explores this important English futurist architectural collaborative.

Archigram, was active as a group for over 12 years, publishing a journal of the same name, starting in the early 1960s. The collaborative, comprised of Warren Chalk, Peter Cook, Dennis Crompton, David Greene, Ron Herron and Michael Webb (all of whom remained active individually after they stopped printing "Archigram"), has had widespread international influence over the years, and is still considered "fresh" and relevant. Archigram developed radical, often shocking, alternatives to "houses", "cities" and other archetypal forms of architecture. These architects and designers were inspired by new developments in science and technology, by space travel and the moon landing, and by underground culture and even the Beatles (whose Yellow Submarine was, conversely, clearly influenced by Archigram).

Archigram 1961-74 will consist of up to 800 pieces created by these architects, including original issues of their publication. The exhibition was originally organized by the Kunsthalle, Vienna and the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and is on view at the Kunstvereine in Hamburg through early August. In bringing it to New York, Thread Waxing Space is working with the Schools of Architecture at Pratt Institute and Columbia and Cornell Universities, as well as the Storefront for Art & Architecture, all of whom will show related material at their own spaces, develop public programs, including on-campus symposia and lectures, and assist with publicity.

Numerous educational components are being planned to bring the exhibition to a broad community (New York City's international architecture firms will be contacted regarding the exhibition to seek programming input and to raise visibility and funds). There will be several panel discussions and talks at all participating institutions. Speakers already confirmed include Peter Cook, David Greene and Dennis Crompton of Archigram; Bernard Tschumi, Dean, Columbia School of Architecture; and William Menking of Pratt Institute. A prominent architecture critic will be the moderator of the panel to be held in Thread Waxing Space's main gallery which can seat 150.

As befitting a presentation of this scale, a catalogue is being published. The well-known art publisher Rizzoli International, which had begun developing a book on Archigram on its own, has agreed to publish the exhibition catalogue instead. The prestige and publicity efforts of this publisher should help enormously with exhibition visibility and catalogue sales. *Los Angeles Times* Architecture Critic Nicolai Ouroussoff has agreed to write an essay placing Archigram into a wider cultural context (as "histories" of the group have been written and will be available in a reading room in the gallery).

A small brochure, as well as press releases, will be sent to Thread Waxing Space's and the Storefront for Art & Architecture's combined press list of nearly 300 media outlets and critics,

and Pratt, Columbia, and Cornell will organize mailings to architecture publications and writers, as well as their alumni. Announcement cards/opening reception invitations will be sent to the participating institutions' mail lists, as well as Thread Waxing Space's 4,000+ list of area artists, art patrons, critics and members.

Each year Thread Waxing Space's on-site arts education programs introduce approximately 35-40 school groups to the arts with a tour and hands-on creative workshop. Our veteran arts educators will utilize this exhibition to introduce students to issues of architecture, urban design and scale.

Major university architecture programs, and independent museums of art and design, are being contacted about traveling this exhibition. Very strong interest has already been received from the de Menil Collection (with a consortium of other Houston art venues), and the galleries at the University of South Florida.

Exhibition sponsors will receive a wide range of visibility at the New York City and travel venues.

ARCHI GRAM 1961-71



March 12 - April 25, 1998

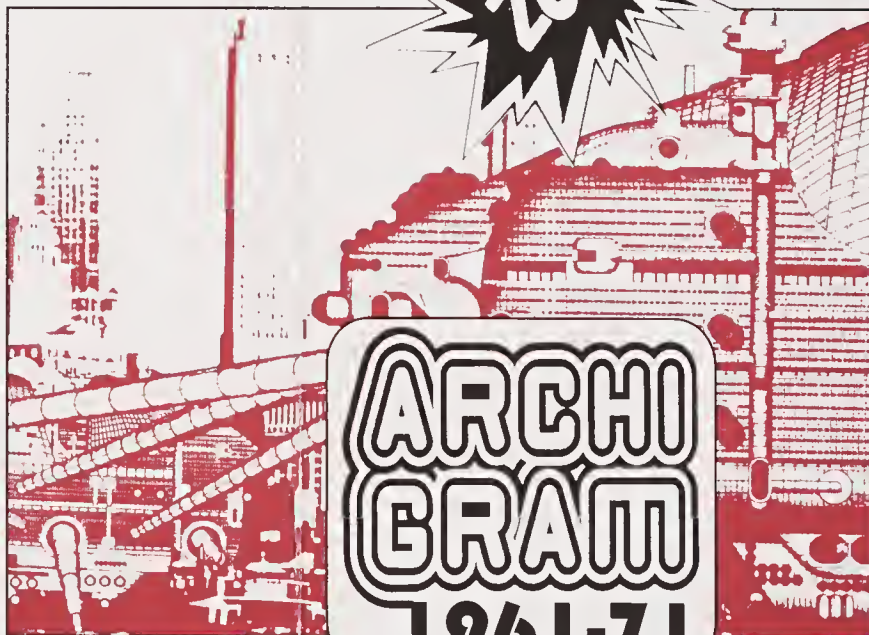
From March 12th through April 25th, 1998 the Thread Waxing Space, in conjunction with Pratt Institute, Columbia University and Cornell University will present **Archigram 1961-1971** a major exhibition of drawings, posters, ephemera and large scale installations that explores this important English futurist architectural collaborative.

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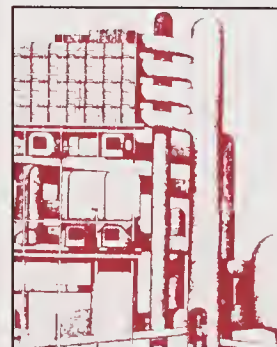
Thread Waxing Space 476 Broadway

Pratt Institute School of Architecture • Columbia University Graduate School Of Architecture • Cornell University School of Architecture • Storefront for Art & Architecture



ARCHI GRAM 1961-71

March 12 - April 25, 1998



...events and publications...



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...participating institutions...



Thread Waxing Space is a prominent public space gallery in lower Manhattan at 476 Broadway. The bulk of the exhibition will be shown at this venue. Pratt Institute, an art and design college in Brooklyn New York, will be coordinating the members of the Archigram group in events and symposia. Columbia University in Upper Manhattan will be participating in symposia and will exhibit a part of the show at the Ross Gallery. Cornell University, in Ithaca New York will also be a full participant and show another part of the work at the Storefront for Art & Architecture. Below is a list of the Institutions and their contacts:

Thread Waxing Space
476 Broadway
New York, NY 10013
tel: 212.274.0792
fax: 212.976.9520
contact: Ellen Salpeter,
Executive Director

School of Architecture
Pratt Institute
200 Willoughby Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11205
tel: 718.399.4304
fax: 718.399.4332
contact: Thomas Hanrahan, Dean
Professor William Menking

Graduate School of Architecture
Columbia University
116th Street & Broadway
New York, NY 10027
tel: 212.854.3414
fax: 212.864.0410
contact: Bernard Tschumi, Dean
Professor Evan Douglas

School of Architecture
Cornell University
143 E. Sibell Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853
tel: 607.255.5236
fax: 607.255.0291
contact: Anthony Vidler, Dean

Storefront for Art & Architecture
97 Kenmare Street
New York, NY 10001
tel: 212.431.5795
contact: Kyong Park, Director

...prospective institutions after new york...

Various museums and galleries have expressed strong interest in exhibiting **Archigram 1961-71**. These include the De Menil Gallery in Texas, the Santa Monica Museum of Art and the San Francisco Museum of Contemporary Art.



...sponsorship and support...

A number of foundations and corporations have been contacted for financial support for the exhibitions. The British Council on the Arts is already providing financial support. This prestigious organization considers the exhibition an important expression of British art and design. Corporate support is particularly important and offers important benefits to the corporate sponsor. All catalogues and invitations at all venues will include the names of all sponsors. Events will also make note of corporate support. These will be attended by the leaders in design and architecture in New York and other cities. The exhibitions promises to provide excellent visibility for all sponsors.

9 January — 15 February 1998

ARCHIGRAM

EXPERIMENTAL ARCHITECTURE 1961-74



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Walking City New York, Ron Herron, 1964
Card layout by Dennis Crompton
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https://archive.org/details/199803_archigram00arch

Printing by E G Bond Ltd

9 January — 15 February 1998

ARCHIGRAM

EXPERIMENTAL ARCHITECTURE 1961-74





ARCHIGRAM

Warren Chalk • Peter Cook • Dennie Crompton • David Greene • Ron Harman • Mike Webb

EXPERIMENTAL ARCHITECTURE 1961-74

9 January - 15 February • **CORNERHOUSE** • 70 Oxford Street Manchester M1 5NH

EXHIBITION PREVIEW • Thursday 8 January • 6.00-8.00pm

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submission rather with that of non submission, &
offering various proposals of an earthly nature, &
...men to shake off their human tormentors we
...believe that to those who in face of the rising
bomber squadrons of Capital go on asking for help how
we propose to do this & how we envisage that & what
will become of their savings & Sunday trousers after a
revolution, we have nothing much to say.

(from Bertold Brecht)

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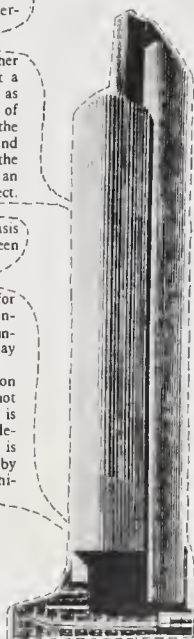
The definitive form of architecture is the commercial block.

Commerce, on the other hand, offers the architect a completely new role as financial wizard capable of getting the most out of the development, the client and the authorities whilst at the same time producing an economically viable project.

I see a tremendous basis of mutual benefit between commerce and society

The whole procedure for public participation contained in the new Act is undoubtedly set up to delay matters

... looking at the question purely as an architect not only because his work is going to be seriously delayed, but because it is going to be butchered by people who are not architects.



LEISURE & ARTS

Remembering Architecture's Dream Team

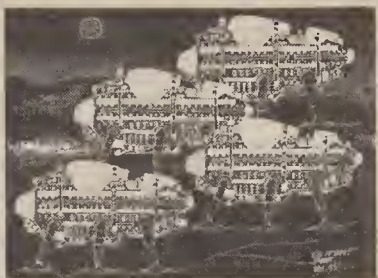
By ADA LOUISE HUNTABLE

New York

It was the swinging '60s in London, a time of the Beatles and Carnaby Street, and of a renegade group of young architects of irrepressible spirits and awesome creativity who swung, soared and regularly poked the Establishment in the eye. Thirty-seven years ago, six thirtysomething friends—Ron Herron, Peter Cook, David Greene, Dennis Crompton, Michael Webb and Warren Chalk—formed a group called Archigram. It was named for their broadsheets—architectural telegrams—on a witty and heady techno-world of the future characterized by the critic Michael Sorkin as a “combination of megalomania and arcadian reverie.” They dealt in the common currency of the '60s—possibilities and protest. At the time, the architectural Establishment was much too angry to respond with anything but outrage. I remember being amused and dismissive, considering it remarkable ephemera.

Given the chance to see it all again in a substantial retrospective exhibition, “Archigram: Experimental Architecture, 1961-74,” I find it still remarkable, intriguingly informative as architectural history and quite stunning as art. The drawings, collages, models and videos, on view until May 9 at Thread Waxing Space at 476 Broadway, in SoHo, carried the emerging postwar technology and consumer society into a Utopian stratosphere of living pods, rent-a-walls and entertainment towers, all patently unbuildable; you just have to put your head on a little differently to enjoy the idealism and irony of a version of urban life carried to zany lengths by a relentlessly inspired and surreal logic. Written off as the pipe-dreams of stunts and visionaries, the work has had an insidious, pervasive influence and surprising trajectory to the present.

Organized by Pratt Institute, under the dedicated eye of Pratt faculty member William Menking, the exhibition opened in Europe, traveling from Vienna to the Pompidou Center in Paris and to Manchester,



'Walking City' (1964)

England. It has been brought to this country by Thread Waxing Space in collaboration with Pratt Institute and Columbia and Cornell Universities, its funding cobbled together from the sponsors and private and public sources. Neither New York nor London museums were receptive to the project, one suspects as much due to a mistaken belief that the work was dated futurist fluff as to crowded agendas or a policy of originating their own exhibitions. A supplementary display can be seen at the Storefront for Art and Architecture on Kenmare Street until Saturday; after that the show goes to Pasadena, San Francisco and Seattle. A small, dense catalog of useful essays has been funded by the publication program of the J.M. Kaplan fund.

In tune with the pop sensibilities of the '60s defined by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and others, Archigram's message was delivered in comic book style. An early manifesto shows a Doctor Strangelove type proclaiming in a balloon caption “We have chosen to bypass the decaying Bauhaus image which is an insult to functionalism,” while a busty beauty responds in a silent balloon—“(thinks) we are in pursuit of an idea, a new vernacular, something to stand alongside space capsules, computers and throw-away packages of an atomic-electronic age.” So much for the task and the small talk. What follows is serious play; these were not angry young men; they were having a wonderful time. Their imagery was a pastiche of detailed technological renderings and pop culture cutouts; their gurus were Buckminster Fuller and Ornette Coleman.

Their style was part Superman and Captain Marvel, part sci-fi and high-tech, part bemused social commentary. The message was that orthodox modernism was passé, that architecture was not eternal and timeless, but disposable, mutable, movable and temporary.

What Archigram proposed was a sort of fun-fair of tech-kit Instant Cities dropped from dirigibles, complete with all the baggage of popular culture; Plug-In Cities in which capsules, pods and clip-ons were stacked in frames with replaceable and expendable parts to accommodate change; and, most memorable of all, Walking Cities, a kind of anthropomorphic architecture, like a giant armadillo on telescoping legs “meant to house a large population of world traveller-workers,” moving on to wherever the economy and society dictated—a high-tech fantasy, “part romantic glorification and part apocalyptic terror,” as the London Observer remarked, that looked “as though it would have stopped to eat the rest of humanity first.” Its inventor, Ron Herron, rendered it as something absolutely unforgettable; an iconic image for our time.

The architects of Archigram thought of themselves as artists, and the work holds up. Peter Cook's later renderings, done in the '80s, can be phantasmagorically beautiful; the group's earlier collages have lost none of their visual bite and wit. This is a future that has neither come nor gone; there is no nostalgia here. What remains is a colorful, tough poetry and the fleeting world view of youth; in the last projects there is a more conventional futurism that either attempts to connect with reality or discards it totally. Archigram's one big brush with the real world, a competition design for an entertainment center in Monte Carlo that was not built, touches earth lightly, but retains its essential pose between techno-wonder and pop-banalities.

The '60s also brought another, better-known manifesto, “Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture,” by Robert Venturi. Both manifestos had unexpected results. Venturi's proclaimed the inclusiveness of past and present, initiating the

philosophical and stylistic changes of post-modernism. While it opened the door to a re-examination of history and symbolism, it also released a flood of superficial, falsely ironic or ineptly imitative work that is dead in the water now. Archigram is curiously alive. One can find a diffusion of its ideas in today's mainstream.

Archigram was probably, as Barry Curtis's catalog essay notes, “a necessary irritant” when modernism was congealing into formalism, even as unprecedented opportunities for change were occurring. What it has actually plugged into, Plug-In Cities aside, is the continuing revision of the modernist aesthetic that incorporates advances in structure and technology. In some ways, it was surprisingly prophetic. Archigram's “bugged” walls, implanted with electronic controls, have become today's “smart glass” programmed to respond to temperature and light. The “robotics” in all of their designs anticipated the increase in electronic automation. Their “information centers” predated the World Wide Web. They simply took off from the global village like an architectural moon shot. But they were not without their debts to the present and the past—from Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes and Kenneth Snelson's tensegrity masts to the amorphous forms and functions of Frederick Kiesler's Endless House.

Far less predictable and quite unexpected has been Archigram's relationship to today's architecture. The idea of the megastructure—an architectural gargantuan that would be all things to all people for all purposes—turned out to be futurism's biggest bomb. But the connections are obvious with the colorful, inside-out mechanics of Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers's Pompidou Center in Paris, designed as universal, flexible space with transparent walls meant to be dematerialized by moving images—a futurism that foundered in practical application but created a 20th-century landmark.

Mr. Rogers's later Lloyd's Building in London is a celebration of stacked service pods and dramatic structural framing. Zaha Hadid's canted shapes and spaces explore beyond the right-angled norm. Archigram's radical organizing and aesthetic features are recognizable in the industrial materials and ramps and inclined planes that control and characterize the provocative buildings of Rem Koolhaas and the work of younger Dutch architects. It is in these areas of practice, and in this sensibility, that the new architecture stakes its position.

But what infuses the best of it is Archigram's combination of the playful and the profound. Who else could have invented the Suitaloon and the Cushicle, in which clothing and furnishings morph into shelter and a lifestyle? Youthful dreams? This was world class fantasy. We need it even more now that we've grown up.

Status Under Siege

By JAMES BOWMAN

When Anne Tyler took up her pen to write her first novel 35 years ago, American marketing lost a potential superstar. Among the ideas for profitable businesses that she seems to have pioneered in her fiction are “comfort food” (“Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant”) and “clutter counseling” (“Saint Maybe”). And it seems only a matter of time before some publisher takes up the idea of travel guides for those who hate leaving home (“The Accidental Tourist”). But the Rent-a-Back company, which employs Barnaby Gaitlin, the hero of “A Patchwork Planet” (Knopf, 288 pages, \$24), could be her biggest hit of all. Just think of the potential market among baby-boomers whose children (when they have any) are few or distant and who, as they grow older, will need younger backs to perform odd jobs around the house.

Yet this author-entrepreneur of genius has little love for the entrepreneurial mentality—or at least for the ambitious among her favorite subjects, those who are precariously perched in the middle classes. For them, social aspiration is a kind of original sin, as we see in the case of Barnaby's ghostly mother. Herself the child of first-generation immigrants, she is desperate to hold on to the social position she has attained by mar-

glar and reform-school product working as an odd-job man. It is pure Anne Tyler, not bothering for the moment to disguise her voice or her contempt for this social climber guilty of the cardinal sin of disapproving of her son's job at Rent-a-Back—“employment that has no lasting point to it,” as his mother says, “no reputation, no future, in preference to work that's of permanent significance. And he's doing it purely for spite.” When Barnaby protests that it's not spite but discomfort around well-heeled do-gooders, his mother cries out: “Barnaby! Your own father's a do-gooder! Think what you've just said to him!”

It is a well-plotted comic moment but also an article in the bill of indictment against this family of sentimentalists from which Barnaby finally has to break away. Through much of the novel, his inability to do so is symbolized by his attachment to the family mythology of the “angel” that is supposed to appear to every generation of male Gaitlins in the form of an attractive young woman who sets him on the right course to health, wealth and success. Ms. Tyler has a lot of fun with these angels, which she treats as a sort of burlesque of the idea of “Providence,” formerly the object of so many Protestant capitalists' devotion. Barnaby's angel, he thinks, is Sophia Maynard, a slightly older blonde he meets on the train to Philadelphia.

Sophia's goodness at first has a soothing influence on his anger and hostility around his family, but she works in a bank and thinks that banking would be a more congenial career for Barnaby than odd-jobbery. No regular reader of Anne Tyler will give much for the chances of such a woman matched up against the feisty little dark-haired girl with the ethnic name who works alongside him at Rent-a-Back. Barnaby's doing away with the angelic illusion becomes a necessary stage in his final abandonment of bourgeois sentimentality and with it the kind of prudential wisdom (“Sophia”) that forces the free-spirited to work in banks.

This insistence on Barnaby's remaining one of Ms. Tyler's growing collection of lovable misfits is a bad sign, suggestive of a sentimentality of her own and creeping portentousness about her hero's unremarkable life choices. For all its local brilliances, “A Patchwork Planet” is not one of her best novels. These, including “Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant,” “The Accidental Tourist,” “Breathing Lessons” and “Saint Maybe,” all deal with grief and loss and the power of love and duty and domesticity and, yes, even small businesses, to hold at bay the encroaching darkness of despair. Perhaps as Ms. Tyler had to cope with the recent death of her husband, to whose memory this book is dedicated, she did not trust herself to embark once again on such a serious subject, but I hope she will next time.

Mr. Bowman is American editor of the (London) Times Literary Supplement.



American Innocence, Amorous Guilt

By HEIDI WALESON

St. Paul, Minn.

George Antheil's 1930 opera “Transatlantic,” which was given its first complete American performance here by the Minnesota Opera on Saturday, is a kaleidoscopically clever romp through the musical styles of the early 20th century. Sinuous tangos give way to chords right out of “Turandot.” A chorus in a speaksakey vamps on the folk song “The Erie Canal.” Gangsters sing a quick fugue, the heroine does torchy Jerome Kern, and jungle drums alternate with honky-tonk piano. Entire scenes are built on constantly shifting, off-the-beat Stravinskian rhythms, and there are whispers of music still in the future, such as “Candide” and “Porgy and Bess.”

Antheil (1900-1959), born in Trenton, N.J., pushed the boundaries of musical experimentation during his salad days in Paris in the 1920s, where he hung out with the likes of Igor Stravinsky and Ezra Pound. “Transatlantic,” which had its premiere in Frankfurt just a few months after Kurt Weill's “Mahagonny,” is less aggressively daring than Antheil's “Ballet mécanique,” scored for 10 pianos and an airplane propeller, but it captures the frenetic pace and confusion of the Jazz Age.

This wealth of musical invention is hung on a scaffold of undeveloped characters and convoluted story (Antheil wrote his own libretto). Ajax (Sherrill Milnes), an unscrupulous industrialist, plots to control the American presidency by bankrolling the campaign of the honest, innocent Hector (Karl Daymond), and setting him up with Helen (Juliana Ram-baldi), his kept siren. Helen has fallen in love with Hector and won't play ball; she also has her own problems—Leo (Dennis Peterson), her importunate suitor and Ajax's handpicked treasurer for Hector's campaign, and Jason (Mark Calkins), the European bon vivant whom Ajax has forced her to marry. The characters never become more than cutouts, but the music keeps things going, cleverly pacing and balancing big production numbers with intimate scenes. Antheil does rhythm and color better than pure melody, so the satire is stronger than the sentiment.

Mr. Milnes, not required to do any sustained singing, barked and growled powerfully as the villainous Ajax; Mr. Peterson seemed to be trying to compete with him on

volume, which was a mistake. While Ms. Rambaldi was not always in control of her lush soprano, Mr. Daymond, who has a plangent baritone, made a promising U.S. debut. Conductor David Agler shaped the score with energy and wit, and the chorus was well-etched and strong.

John Conklin's designs used small, moveable set pieces, brightly illuminated by Pat Collins, in a blacked-out stage. The quick changes between the 28 brief scenes of Act III seemed like child's play, and the misty projections by Wendall K. Harrington of New York City skyscrapers and the Brooklyn Bridge were clever and evocative. I could have done without the huge staring faces and Mr. Conklin's signature bars of neon, however. James Robinson's direction captured the pace and variety of the work, especially the big campaign-office numbers, in which the chorus adopts mechanical movements to symbolize political manipulation and mob mindlessness. But some clever text ideas got lost: In two ensembles, all the principal characters



Opera
“Transatlantic”
“Paul Bunyan”
“Emmeline”

state their complicated thoughts simultaneously and not very harmoniously. The production team scrolled titles above the head of each singer, but who can read and watch all that?

At the end of “Transatlantic,” Hector wins the election in spite of Ajax, and the characters vow to “give up jazz and cocktails” and get to work. (Mr. Conklin made that ironic, putting them in a soup kitchen to prefigure the Depression.) Benjamin Britten and W.H. Auden's “Paul Bunyan” (1941), recently presented at the New York City Opera, also subscribes to this optimistic view of American innocence, with the unseen giant lumberjack (the amplified spoken voice of John McDonough) an omniscient and benevolent deity shepherding his recalcitrant charges toward the creation of American culture. “Bunyan” too is an artful pastiche of musical styles, with a Ballard Singer (David M. Lutken), armed with guitar, providing the connective narration.

First seen at the Glimmerglass Opera,

this charming Mark Lamos production, with Paul Steinberg's sets that look like jewel-colored, corrugated cardboard, evokes the American wilderness. It begins with one of the best images I've ever seen in an opera production: the entire chorus, clad in blue and holding small fir trees, sitting in blue rocking chairs as they sing Britten's haunting song of the primeval, unchanging forest. The City Opera chorus and orchestra, led by Stewart Robertson, were especially precise and lively in this performance, coping admirably with its mix of musical styles that includes pure opera, Gilbert and Sullivan, Kurt Weill and the blues, for starters. Jeffrey Lentz was appealing as Johnny Inkslinger, and John McVeigh's pleasant light tenor showed to good advantage in the role of Hot Biscuit Slim.

Tobias Picker's grim and heartbreaking “Emmeline” got its second hearing at New York City Opera in April, and it warrants many more. This tale of a 19th-century Massachusetts mill girl who unwittingly marries a young man who turns out to be her own son is tautly dramatic, with a lush, intelligently paced score and an eloquent, well-set libretto by the poet J.D. McClatchy. The handsome Francesca Zambello/Robert Israel production of the 1996 Santa Fe premiere reappeared here, slightly reworked to the opera's advantage. The Act II build-up to the scene in which the young man's identity is revealed was tighter, and the growing love between Emmeline (Patricia Racette) and Matthew (Curt Peterson) had more snap and feeling.

The principal Santa Fe performers ably repeated their roles, with mezzo-soprano Anne-Marie Owens as the dourly religious Aunt Hannah, and Victor Ledbetter a tad less sympathetic as Emmeline's seducer, Maguire. Ms. Racette once again gave a tour-de-force performance of the title role, her soaring soprano and impassioned acting building spectacularly to her final scene, which brilliantly reprises Emmeline's life (and the opera) in a 10-minute episode that is built upon the opening funeral dirge. A live performance recording of the opera, made in Santa Fe, has just been released on Albany records, and while George Manahan's work with the City Opera orchestra and Ms. Owens's New York performance were superior, it is nonetheless a respectable record of a very important work.

TOP 10 PRIME-TIME PROGRAMS

Compiled by Nielsen Media Research. Copyright 1998.

RANK	PROGRAM NAME	NETWORK	RATING ¹	SHARE ²
1	E.R.	NBC	20.6	33
2	Seinfeld	NBC	18.9	29
3	CBS Sunday Movie 'The Echo of Thunder'	CBS	16.4	26
4	Veronica's Closet	NBC	15.9	24
5	Friends	NBC	15.3	26
6	Just Shoot Me	NBC	14.4	24
7	60 Minutes	CBS	12.5	23
8	Dateline NBC Tuesday	NBC	12.0	21
9	Law and Order	NBC	11.9	20
10	Dateline NBC Monday	NBC	11.5	20

¹ Percentage of TV-owning households tuned to show in question

² Percentage of all switched-on sets tuned to the show in question

INTERNATIONAL

Malaysia's Grand Social Experiment May Be Next Casualty of Asian Crisis

By STEVE GLAIN
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA
THE FINANCIAL TURMOIL pounding Southeast Asia is jeopardizing an unusual, three-decade experiment in social engineering.

Malaysia, a multicultural country of 20 million people has, during the past three decades crafted an impressive national affirmative-action program. The government effectively segregated the economy between the indigenous majority, known as *bumiputras* or "sons of the soil," and non-*bumiputras*, primarily ethnic Chinese who have dominated the economy for generations.

By subsidizing the *bumiputras* and restricting the others, the government aimed to deliver a third of the economy into *bumiputra* hands by 1990 and avoid the kind of racial frictions that led to bloody riots in 1969. The policy has reduced poverty and helped integrate and harmonize a potentially volatile population. "I remember being relieved during the riots," says Abdul Karim Tarmizi, the group general manager of engineering giant Land & General Bhd. and one of thousands of *bumiputras* who studied abroad at the government's expense. "It forced the authorities to cope with the situation."

Now, however, the program is in trouble. The economy has been hit by a one-third drop in the value of the currency, the ringgit, and by a slide in exports, which has exposed the unintended side effects of the pro-*bumi* policy. After a generation of entitlements, Malaysia is littered with clunky conglomerates, debt-saddled banks and crony capitalists. Companies are so desperate for cash that the government last month announced it may repeal the spirit, if not the letter, of affirmative action by permitting non-*bumiputra* companies to acquire a substantial or a controlling interest in *bumiputra* companies.

Structural inefficiencies, concealed for years by decades of rapid expansion, are becoming ap-

parent as growth recedes. The Malaysian government is now estimating the economy will grow 2% to 3% this year, down from its forecast of 7% to 8% growth made late last year. Malaysia posted 7.8% growth in 1997. Even Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, an enthusiastic supporter of affirmative action, has complained of a "subsidy mentality" among *bumiputras*.

Affirmative action "has greatly enhanced social mobility, educational opportunities and distributive justice," says Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. "But we should take heed of criticism and concerns about possible excesses."

ARMY OF STUDENTS

The idea of deploying an army of *bumiputra* students overseas was devised in the 1970s by a group of politicians and cabinet ministers, including a young Dr. Mahathir.

"We figured if we sent 2,000 out and 200 came back with degrees, it would be worth it," says an architect of the plan.

Laws were passed to favor *bumiputras*, who account for 60% of the population. Companies seeking a listing on the local stock exchange are required to have a *bumiputra* shareholding of at least 30%.

Ethnic Chinese, who make up about 30% of the population, aren't interested in investing in *bumiputra*-controlled companies and Chinese companies weren't favored in government contract bidding.

Many of Malaysia's non-*bumiputras* tolerate the restrictions as a small price to pay for social stability. Stephen Yeo, an ethnic Chinese who helps run his family's china business, says he can't bid for the annual government dinnerware contracts worth as much as 10 million ringgit (\$2.6 million). "But it beats the alternative," he says. The policy "has encouraged me to diversify my clientele."

Some non-*bumiputras* have thrived within the system by working through so-called *Ali Baba* companies, which are firms run by Malays who do the bidding of non-*bumiputras*. Other non-Malays, in

particular a community of wealthy Chinese, have enriched themselves by assiduously courting patronage from influential politicians.

GRIP TIGHTENS ON ECONOMY

Overall, however, *bumiputras* have been strengthening their grip on the economy at the expense of non-*bumiputras*. The government estimates that *bumiputra* companies account for about 20% of corporate equity, up from 2.4% in 1971, while the Chinese share has declined to 41%, from almost 50%. Some of Malaysia's *bumiputra* tycoons owe their empires to government patronage that favored them for their ethnicity and trustworthiness more than their business skills.

Specifically, they can thank Dr. Mahathir, who put the *bumiputra* policy on steroids after his election as prime minister in 1982. Having seen what close ties between government and industry did for Japan, Dr. Mahathir concocted a similar recipe to create a *bumiputra*-dominated Malaysia Inc. When the government announced in the late 1980s that it would privatize some of the country's most important assets—expressways, power plants, megacities—the prime minister divided up the choice franchises among a fraternity of favored businessmen. The privileged few, so the theory went, would stimulate business activity among a wider swath of *bumiputras*.

'NO LIMIT TO GREED'

Instead, wealth congealed at the top. "The prime minister thought he could create a handful of billionaires, and the wealth would cascade down," says Shahrir Abdul Samad, a businessman and legislator. "The only problem is that there is no limit to greed."

Deputy Prime Minister Anwar has said the government won't intervene to bail out troubled industries, but recent events suggest otherwise.

In early March, a state-run oil company announced it would purchase assets held by a debt-laden shipping firm controlled by Dr. Mahathir's



son. The move was widely condemned as an example of the kind of crony capitalism that plagues so much of Asia and that the *bumiputra* policy was intended to neutralize.

"We need more people who have been through failures and developed the expertise that comes from them," says Ahmad Fauzi Ali, who started out with two failed companies and ended up launching Sapura Advanced Systems Sdn. Bhd, a subsidiary of the Sapura telecommunications group and a world-class software maker. "If I start a company, I want people who have failed."

But failure isn't something the *bumi* policy envisaged. Dr. Mahathir wanted to see *bumis* succeed with government help. The best example was Perusahan Otomobil Nasional Bhd., or Proton, which enjoys a virtual monopoly on the domestic passenger-car industry. But running a car business is tricky, especially if the business has a social agenda.

FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESS

The Malaysia economic slowdown, according to analysts and businessmen, has spotlighted Proton's fundamental weakness: an inflated cost structure. The company sells its cars at a huge premium to manufacturing cost, they say, in part because Malaysia's *bumiputra* policy discourages government-supported enterprises, such as Proton, from sourcing components from non-*bumiputra* companies. A Chinese businessman, working through a *bumiputra* nominee, which is a perfectly legal type of front company, says he makes electronic shading devices for the Proton's back mirror for 200 ringgit. He then sells the device, which Proton offers as an optional accessory, for higher prices in part to pay off his nominee. A Proton spokesman says the company doesn't divulge the prices it pays for components.

Similarly, Malaysia's unsinkable banking sector, economists say, is also ripe for a bailout. Even the government acknowledges that

lenders—such as Bank Bumiputra Malaysia, which is 100% state-owned and has already been rescued twice in the last two decades—are in need of recapitalization. Nonperforming loans are estimated by private economists at about 20% of total assets, well above the government's official 8.7% figure. The bank made too many politically correct loans to *bumiputra* individuals and companies that are now unable to repay.

Part of this is because, for years, the country's commercial banks lined up to loan money to conglomerates that enjoyed government support. As a result, bankers learned to evaluate borrowers on the basis of their place in the *bumiputra* hierarchy, rather than their creditworthiness or the viability of their business.

No one knows the depths of Malaysia's banking problems better than Mr. Shahrir, the former legislator who was squeezed out of the ruling party in 1986. Like many politicians, Mr. Shahrir was obliged to start his own business to augment his income as a legislator. His requests for loans from *bumiputra*-controlled banks were turned down, he says, after he was blackballed by the ruling party for opposing Dr. Mahathir and appearing "less Malay."

"They never asked me if I was qualified or had enough money to pay back the loan," he says. "They

only asked: 'What would the prime minister say?'" So Mr. Shahrir turned to a Chinese-managed bank, and was surprised to find it wouldn't accept shares in his company as collateral, a cornerstone of the *bumiputra* policy. Most Chinese banks, alarmed that a growing share of loan activity was backed with stakes in obscure or untested companies, were demanding as collateral hard assets like property or cash reserves.

"It taught me the value of cash," says Mr. Shahrir, who now runs a successful importing company. "And it made me mad that ethnic Malaysians don't run their banks that way."

To raise the incomes of ethnic Malays, the state tried to place a third of the economy in their hands. A weaker economy exposes the costs of this program.

The Ringgit's Fall ...

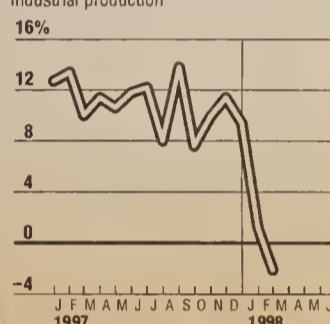
U.S.-dollar value of 10 ringgit; weekly close



Source: Dow Jones

Has Sent Output Plunging ...

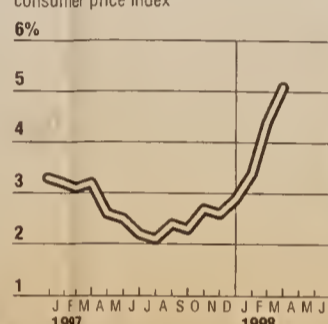
Year-to-year percentage change in index of industrial production



Source: Datastream

And Rekindled Inflation ...

Year-to-year percentage change in consumer price index



Source: Datastream

Deepening Ethnic Divisions

Ethnic breakdown of Malaysia's population



Source: CIA World Fact Book

Thai Business in China Faces Threat of Default

By ERIK GUYOT

HONG KONG—C.P. Pokphand Co., a Thai agribusiness that is one of the largest foreign businesses operating in China, said it is in danger of defaulting on debts of \$93 million. The company's difficulties underscore how Asia's debt woes are beginning to affect companies doing business within China.

C.P. Pokphand said it is unable to repay principal on foreign debts that are being called in today, though it remains able to make interest payments. C.P. Pokphand, which trades on the Hong Kong stock market, had China revenue of \$1.5 billion last year, mostly from poultry and animal-feed production but also from motorcycle manufacturing. The company is controlled by Thailand's Charoen Pokphand Group, one of the largest foreign investors in China.

C.P. Pokphand's situation highlights the possibility that the debt woes plaguing highly leveraged companies around Asia are trickling into China. Like C.P. Pokphand, a number of leading Chinese state-owned conglomerates have taken on high levels of debt to finance expansion. Those companies—the parents of some high-profile Hong Kong-based companies known as "red chips"—are trying to refinance their short-term debt. However, none of these state-owned companies appear to be in danger of default.

C.P. Pokphand, China's largest poultry producer, is the first major manufacturing company in Hong Kong to report financial difficulties. Earlier this year several finance-related companies were hit by Asia's economic crisis, including the investment bank Perergrine Investments Holdings Ltd., which collapsed.

At the heart of C.P. Pokphand's predicament is a move by some creditors to

Poultry Producer's Problems Sink Its Shares

C. P. Pokphand's Markets

Total 1996 assets, by source market



*Including Hong Kong headquarters' general expenses

Stock Price

Weekly close of C.P. Pokphand shares, in Hong Kong dollars



Sources: the company, Datastream

ask for early repayment of \$93 million of floating-rate notes. The notes, which were arranged by BT Asia Ltd., a unit of Bankers Trust New York Corp., are due in April 2000. But note-holders have the right to call the notes for early payment today.

C.P. Pokphand said in a statement late Tuesday that it had asked those note-holders to revoke their redemption notices, or "an event of default will arise." C.P. Pokphand says it can meet interest payments of \$3.5 million due today. A banker to C.P. Pokphand said the company technically isn't in default immediately, because it has a grace period of about 15 days.

C.P. Pokphand has been in closed-door talks with bankers since April 2 to reschedule debt. The banker said major creditors had agreed to a "standstill agreement," under which they wouldn't call in loans, and were pressing the large number of other note-holding banks to abide by the

standstill agreement. C.P. Pokphand on Tuesday called for a May 29 meeting with note-holders to have the redemption notices revoked.

Officials from C.P. Pokphand in Hong Kong and Bangkok declined to comment, as did officials from BT Asia.

Today's debt deadline follows earlier debt problems at Charoen Pokphand Group, Thailand's largest conglomerate. Last month, the Bangkok-based group said it was seeking to reschedule \$40 million in loans owed by a joint venture.

C.P. Pokphand holds 70% of motorcycle maker Ek Chor China Motorcycle Co., which is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. In Hong Kong trading Wednesday, C.P. Pokphand closed at 1.12 Hong Kong dollars (14.46 U.S. cents), down three Hong Kong cents. Shares were hit earlier this year by debt worries and are down 34% since Feb. 18.

Siemens Unit to Form Strategic Partnership With Taiwan's Acer

By MATTHEW ROSE

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Siemens AG's Siemens-Nixdorf Informationssysteme unit, Europe's largest computer maker, is to announce a strategic partnership today with personal-computer maker Acer Inc. of Taiwan, said individuals familiar with the situation.

Both companies declined to comment beyond confirming that a news conference was scheduled for today.

The alliance will cover such areas as product development, manufacturing, marketing and sales, the individuals said. Financial details couldn't be determined.

The alliance illustrates the pressure on midsize PC makers to compete with such global giants as Compaq Computer Corp. and Dell Computer Corp. Analysts say the SNI-Acer pact should help both companies make gains in countries where their operations are weak.

Separately, electronics group Siemens said it might not be able to reach its profit forecast for the year ending Sept. 30 because of problems in various divisions and the need to make some provisions for its Asian operations. The company, which posted a profit of 2.6 billion marks (\$1.45 billion) for fiscal 1997, previously had said that it expected to exceed three billion marks in fiscal 1998.

Siemens said that in the six months ended March 31, profit rose 10% to 1.19 billion marks before extraordinary gains, from 1.08 billion marks a year earlier. The figure was below analysts' expectations of 1.28 billion marks. Including extraordinary income of 180 million marks from the sale of various operations, first-half net was 1.37 billion marks, Siemens said.

Mexico's Banacci to Raise Capital Base; Net Doubles

By G WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

MEXICO CITY—Grupo Financiero Banamex-Accival SA said that its first-quarter earnings doubled and that it will raise its capital base by \$405 million, signaling a faster-than-expected return to health by Mexico's largest banking group.

Banamex, as it is known, posted first-quarter net earnings of 1,088 billion pesos (\$128.6 million), compared with 523 million pesos a year earlier. The earnings exceeded Wall Street's consensus estimate.

The group also announced the completion of a capitalization program that it agreed to with Mexican regulators. Banacci shareholders have already added \$130 million to the company's capital base, and according to the announcement yesterday, will raise an additional \$405 million by selling assets in the next quarter.

Japan's Finance Ministry to Announce Disciplinary Steps in Internal Probe

By NORIHIKO SHIROUZO

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

TOKYO—Japan's Ministry of Finance said it is wrapping up its internal investigation involving corruption allegations and that next week it will announce disciplinary measures against those found to have accepted excessive entertainment from financial institutions.

A Finance Ministry official wouldn't say how many of the 550 bureaucrats the ministry has investigated since February will be disciplined.

Earlier this month, the Bank of Japan reprimanded 98 central-bank staff members following its own in-house inquiry. The internal inquiries at the Finance Ministry and the Bank of Japan were precipitated by arrests of several bureaucrats at the country's financial agencies by the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office. At the finance ministry, four employees have been arrested since the start of this year on charges of accepting lavish dining and dining from banks. In March, prosecutors also arrested a senior central bank official on charges of accepting bribes from banks.

One finance ministry bureaucrat who expects to face reprimand is Seiichi Sato, who served in 1994 and 1995 as a key official of the ministry's division overseeing insur-

ance companies. Mr. Sato, who was dispatched last year to a provincial government in central Japan, resigned his provincial government position yesterday to be transferred back to the Finance Ministry today.

"My understanding is that I am returning to the ministry to face some kind of disciplinary action," said Mr. Sato, reached by telephone at home in Nagoya yesterday. He declined to comment further on the disciplinary issue.

Spokesmen at Dai-ichi Mutual Life Insurance Co. and Nippon Life Insurance Co. said prosecutors raided their headquarters in Tokyo last month and confiscated documents on how the two insurance companies entertained Ministry of Finance bureaucrats in recent years.

The most severe punishment the ministry could impose under its code of conduct is dismissal. That option isn't available for Finance Minister Hikaru Matsunaga when he determines disciplinary measures to be announced next week. Dismissal of a ministry staff member would require formal criminal charges against the member, who would have to be indicted and admit to prosecutors' charges.

The worst that could happen to a reprimanded bureaucrat, according to the finance ministry official, is a salary cut.

Brazil's Market Reform May Slow With Death of Two Cardoso Aides

By PETER FRITSCH and MATT MOFFETT

Staff Reporters of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

SAO PAULO, Brazil—Just when President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's re-election campaign and economic-reform program seemed to be shifting into high gear, Mr. Cardoso has been jolted by the deaths of two key political aides.

The deaths in recent days of Sergio Motta, Brazil's communications minister and head of the kitchen cabinet, and Luis Eduardo Magalhaes, a legislator who was the administration's point man in the lower house of Congress, aren't expected to derail Mr. Cardoso's bid for a second term in October's presidential election. But the "irreparable losses," as Mr. Cardoso termed them, could weaken the government's ability to promote controversial free-market measures unless the sometimes aloof Mr. Cardoso takes a more hands-on political role.

"The election is probably still OK, but holding the [governing] coalition together will be increasingly difficult for the president," said James Ferrer, director of George Washington University's Institute of Brazilian Issues. Investors appeared to agree: Share prices on the Sao Paulo Stock exchange fell 2.7% in nervous trading yesterday.

Known to be suffering from Legionnaires' disease since 1991, the 57-year-old Mr. Motta died of complications from a respiratory infection, and his death didn't

come as a great surprise. Moreover, most of the major changes sought from his ministry had been achieved. On his watch, Brazil installed some 12 million fixed phone lines—more than the number of lines existing when he took over in 1994. His largest task, the privatization of state-owned phone company Telebras SA, is on track for this year. The sale is expected to fetch the government more than \$20 billion.

But it is in his role as Mr. Cardoso's right-hand man that Mr. Motta will be missed. One of the president's closest friends, Mr. Motta engineered his election campaign and often served as his shadow chief of staff on delicate political matters. "Without Sergio Motta, the government will be weaker, less controversial and the president more alone than ever," wrote newsweekly *Istoe*.

That is even more true given the unexpected loss of the 43-year-old Mr. Magalhaes Tuesday night to a heart attack. Mr. Cardoso "simply won't be able to replace him," said Mr. Ferrer. Mr. Magalhaes bridged the gap with opposition parties on the administration's still-pending key reforms, and was a crucial link to the Senate, controlled by his father, Antonio Carlos Magalhaes. Often mentioned as a future presidential candidate, the younger Mr. Magalhaes had registered as his party's gubernatorial candidate in his home state of Bahia.

Indonesia's Financial System Stays Messy

Continued From Page A13

are still fleeing the banking system, and IBRA is sinking in more government cash to replace them. Figures released Tuesday show that the central bank has continued this month to pump money into the banking sector to make up for deposit runs; the central bank's claims on IBRA, which is dispersing the replacement funds, rose to 103 trillion rupiah (\$12.88 billion) as of last Friday, up 18% from the end of March. "The run on the banking system is not over," said a research director who declined to be identified.

Even at some of Indonesia's healthiest banks, nonperforming loans have hit 25%, extremely high by world standards; across the sector, the average is probably closer to 50%, some analysts estimate. That means more banks may need intensive care in the weeks to come.

Perhaps most worrying of all, Indonesia faces what would technically be its first sovereign default of the crisis if it doesn't make payment soon on debts Indonesian banks owe their foreign counterparts, and which the government guaranteed in late January. Almost immediately after the

government guaranteed those debts, Indonesian banks stopped making payments, according to foreign bankers. The central bank has yet to make good on its guarantee, which is now nearly 90 days old. "Technically, we would consider that a sovereign default," said a senior foreign banker in Jakarta.

At a news conference with other economic officials, Bank Indonesia Governor Syahril Sabirin said Indonesia is going to settle the debts, most of which stem from trade-finance lines and which he said total about \$500 million. Ginandjar Kartasasmita, Indonesia's top economic official, said it is "very important to settle those debts."

Mr. Sabirin said clearing the arrears would open the way for international banks to extend new credit for trade, which has ground nearly to a halt in recent months. But foreign banks maintain that it is the reluctance of Indonesian banks to extend new loans that is now causing the bottleneck. Seven foreign banks have received \$100 million each in cash from Bank Indonesia to be held in Singapore to back international-trade financing, but they say that Indone-

sian banks haven't been coming to them with business. "At this moment, no one is extending credit within this country," said the head of another foreign bank here.

And that's not likely to improve if interest rates continue to rise, as many economists argue they must despite the economic damage that an IMF-imposed tight monetary policy already is inflicting. Bank Indonesia Tuesday raised one-month interest rates to 50% from 45%, giving a short-lived boost to the rupiah. But that's barely keeping up with inflation, which the IMF is hoping to cap at 45% this year.

Indonesia's economy, to be sure, has bounced back from the depths it reached during the worst of the Asian financial crisis. Officials yesterday called attention to a steady rise in recent weeks in the rupiah. The rupiah closed Wednesday at around 7,950 to the dollar, compared with about 10,000 a month ago. The new cabinet's commitment to reform will ensure the currency continues gaining strength, officials argue. "We've proved to the skeptics that we're going to implement what we've agreed," Mr. Ginandjar said.

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Calder, High and Low: Mobiles and Stables

Continued From Weekend Page 35

friendly modernism. It reveals a driven, omnivorous artist prone to borrow other artists' ideas and, at his best, rework them for his own purposes.

One of the strengths of this show, but also one of its weaknesses, is that the curators seem intent on making the same point, on pulling back the mask of Calder's great, diffuse reputation, itself a form of invisibility, and letting us see his progress, step by step. At times it's slow going, an exhibition perhaps most exciting for specialists and die-hard art lovers. But this may be what's necessary to give Calder the full and complex credit he deserves.

During his lifetime, he was heralded on both sides of the Atlantic. In Paris, he was friendly with, and exhibited with, the opposing camps of the Dada/Surrealists and the Abstraction-Création Group. In New York, he was championed from the early 1930's by the Museum of Modern Art, one of three Americans to be included in Alfred H. Barr Jr.'s 1936 exhibition "Cubism and Abstract Art." The first of his many retrospectives was held there in 1943.

But by the time Calder died in 1976, at the age of 78, his early radicalism could seem obscure. He had become, not unlike Henry Moore, known primarily as part of the establishment, a maker of high-brow, high-profile, sometimes bland public commissions, the best of which is probably "La Grande Vitesse," the monumental red stabile that has become the civic logo of Grand Rapids, Mich. Somewhat zanier were the bright patchwork designs he created for three Braniff airplanes in the early 1970's. And the mobiles that he had perfected were being generalized by offspring beyond count, from svelte lamps and infant's crib toys to hippie wind chimes.

It's only a slight exaggeration to say that this show may make it possible to know Calder as only Calder knew Calder. It includes a number of rarely seen works, most notably several stunning relief-type mobiles from 1936. One of these show-stoppers, "Red Panel," whose central motif is a finned metal peanut shape, painted white on one side and green on the other, suspended from its top edge, has not been exhibited in 55 years. Also present are the artist's



National Gallery of Art

Above, Calder's "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man." Below, "Bougainvillier." (Both 1947.)



the gap, revealing in embryo Calder's penchant for motion, suspension and witty abbreviation.

All that was missing was abstraction, which Calder apprehended in a flash, during a 1930 visit to Mondrian's studio in Paris. Viewing the artist's frameless environmental painting, a work of proto-installation art made by pinning squares of colored paper to the walls, was, Calder said, "like the baby being slapped to make his lungs start working." Although Mondrian didn't agree, Calder thought the squares of color would be more interesting if they moved back and forth in space. The idea put his

ARCHITECTURE REVIEW

From the 60's, Paper Dreams That Reflect the Modern City

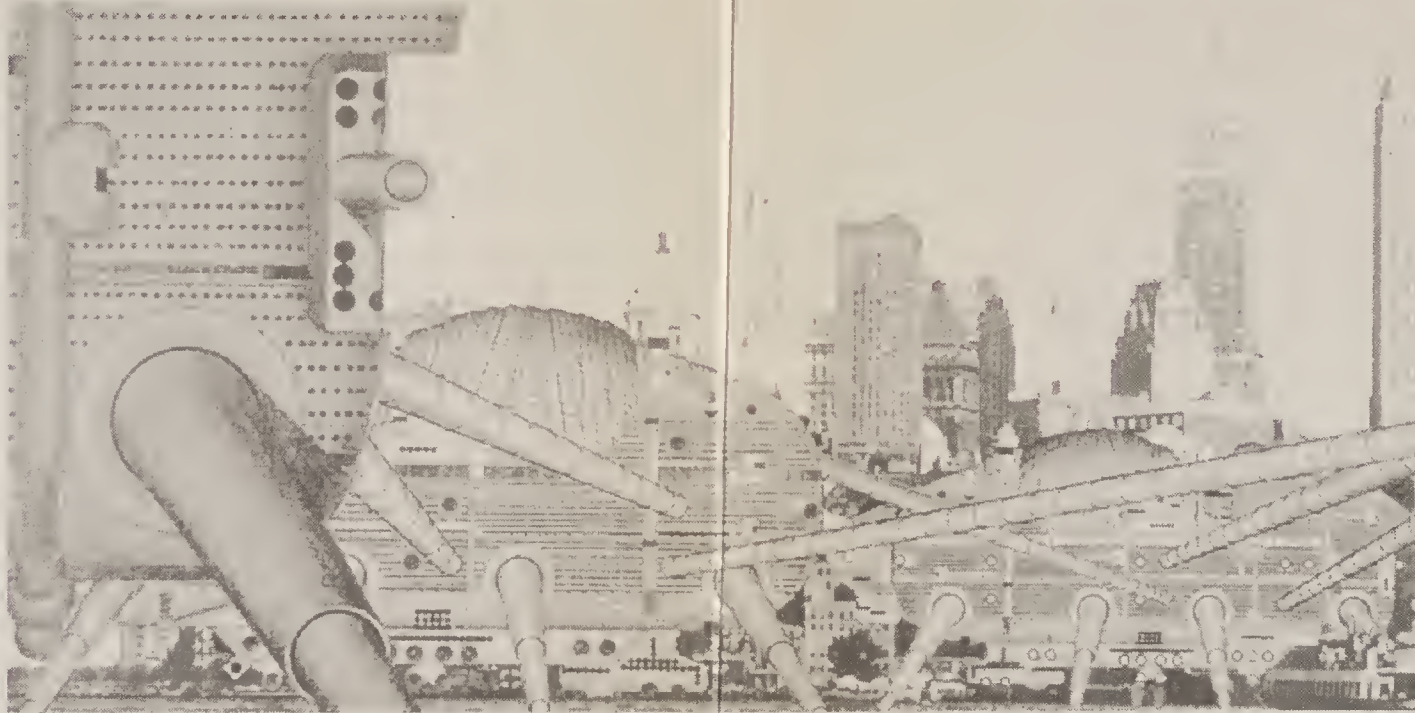
By HERBERT MUSCHAMP

Celebration, the neo-traditional Florida town created by the Disney Company, is not favored by smart people. But this should not discourage other entertainment companies from getting into the housing business. On the contrary. Virgin Records, for example, could probably build some spectacular neighborhoods. Or so you may think while touring the show at the Thread Waxing Space on the work of Archigram, the British group of architectural visionaries that flourished from 1961-74.

If Warren Chalk, Peter Cook, Dennis Crompton, David Greene, Ron Herron and Michael Webb — the founding members of that group — deserve to be called visionaries, the reason is not simply that none of Archigram's projects were built. It is that many of their ideas, which once seemed hilariously unfeasible, now look like supremely practical responses to the contemporary city. After all, Archigram's work started out as an attempt to recast architecture in the image of entertainment. In any era dominated by amusement parks and retro-themed downtowns, their work looks not only prescient but sober.

"Walking City." "Plug-In City." "Instant City." Archigram's urban fantasies were among the most widely published projects in the 1960's. And they helped usher in the idea, still current, that the art of architecture depends on paper fantasies as well as conventionally realized buildings. As their name suggests, the group called themselves after a publication; Archigram was the graphically punchy newsletter in which the group's members began circulating their ideas. When other periodicals, like Architectural Forum under the editorship of Peter Blake, reproduced the group's projects, they were essentially publishing a publication. Thus began the idea that architecture could be a medium of the media.

Archigram's designs were themselves media-inspired. Laid out in a style derived from sci-fi comic books, they featured video monitors, photographs of fashion models, broadcasting beams. The words identifying parts of the project were essential to their graphic impact. And the group members themselves



Metropolis on gigantic legs: "A Walking City — New York" (1964), a photographic image by Ron Herron at Thread Waxing Space.

Swinging ideas from London's protest against postwar dullness.

were part of the pop culture that emerged in the 1960's, the swinging London moment of Mick Jagger, Mary Quant, David Bailey, David Hockney and Joe Orton. Britain had lost the Empire, but pop culture represented an empire that, though predominantly American in outlook, was not the property of any nation.

Archigram started out as a protest against the grim palette of Britain's postwar welfare state. The gray cast concrete of schools and council flats. The brown of cheap wooden veneers inside middle-class row houses. The dull red brick of new universities and garden towns. The black soot of industrial cities. The preceding gener-

ation, including Theo Crosby and Peter and Alison Smithson, had developed Brutalism as a welfare state style. While their work was never as severe as the name implied — the Economist Group, designed by Peter and Alison Smithson, is perhaps the most classically elegant building of postwar Britain — it nonetheless seemed of a piece with belt tightening, cheese paring and Angry Young Men.

Archigram wanted to celebrate the upbeat side of postwar life: the Britain of fun fairs, fashion, creative ferment in the performing arts, assertive sexuality and the divine absurdity of living in an imperial city that no longer ruled over an empire.

Most of Archigram's projects were conceived on an urban scale. They emulated the megastructure, a city-size, mixed-use building type then favored as a planning device. "Instant City," designed by Peter Cook in 1968, was a megastructure on laughing gas. In place of a permanent building, the "City" was a temporary configuration of mobile, mod-

ular parts with different functions, like shops, nightclubs, information centers. A roof, made of tent material, floated above, held aloft by big balloons. The design visualized cities not in terms of buildings, but as changing patterns of events.

The project drew on several themes that recur throughout Archigram's work. Designs were flexible and fun; they were usually assembled from what the team called the kit of parts, an Erector set of modular components. These elements had all featured in the work of Cedric Price, an architect who was Archigram's spiritual uncle. Price's 1962 "Fun Palace," a combination art center, amusement park and open university, featured rooms and walls that could be moved about by building cranes, and this became a familiar fixture in many Archigram projects.

"Plug-In City," designed by Peter Cook in 1964, envisioned towering, crane-topped silos and space frames in which living units, services and public spaces were in a more or less

constant state of shuffle. In Ron Herron's "Walking City," also of 1964, the entire metropolis moved about on gigantic, retractable legs. In the 1970's, the kit of parts concept was adopted by the practitioners of High Tech, the esthetic expressed on a monumental scale at the Pompidou Center in Paris.

To an extent, Archigram's projects can be seen as diagrammatic metaphors for the realities of postwar urbanization. The car had become a principal living space as well as a means of transportation. Social mobility had its consumerist counterpart in the doctrine of planned obsolescence. In suburbia, transience and social disconnection were a way of life. Archigram sought forms that reflected these trends.

In a sense, the group continued the modernist idea that forms should express structure, though for them the structure was social more than architectural. Even Archigram's jolly graphics were functionally expressive. Postwar Britain wasn't just Francis Bacon's screaming heads; it

was the "Carry On" film comedies, too.

The Thread Waxing Space show is surprisingly ambitious. First presented at the Kunsthalle in Vienna, it includes large-scale drawings, models, photomontages and video and slide presentations. Additional material from Archigram's archives is on view at the Arthur Ross Architectural Gallery at Columbia University. And a show at Storefront for Art and Architecture in SoHo is devoted to the work of Ron Herron, an Archigram member who died in 1994.

Work so closely attuned to the Zeitgeist is bound to look somewhat dated. The surprise is that much of the original freshness still clings to Archigram's projects. Partly this comes from the shock of seeing the large, full-scale originals of drawings previously seen in only miniature reproduction. Beyond that, the iconic features of this work — the plug-in modules, flexible spaces and media-circus atmosphere — reflects social and economic trends that have become more pronounced in the last three decades. You can see these features on view today, pulsing happily at the Virgin Megastore in Times Square.

Above all, Archigram's work looks fresh because it offers a social vision that has not become obsolete. The group gave us welfare à go-go. Social conscience that wears white boots. George Melly used the phrase "revolt into style" to describe the mix of political action and pop taste that emerged with the youth culture of the 1960's.

Style is not the enemy of conscience. It can be a powerful tool for change. Indeed, there has yet to appear an entrepreneur with sufficient courage to translate Archigram's vision into housing. But as architects of perception, Archigram turned out to be major builders, after all.

"Archigram 1961-74" is at Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway, between Broome and Grand Streets, SoHo, through May 9. Related material is at the Arthur Ross Architectural Gallery in Buell Hall at Columbia University, Broadway and 116th Street, through April 13 and at the Storefront for Art and Architecture, 97 Kenmare Street, SoHo, through April 25.

landscape architecture

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

THE 1997

AWARDS

FOR THE BEST
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
DESIGN

In the 1997 awards, the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) honored the best landscape architecture designs in the United States. The award is given to the designer of the best landscape architecture design in the United States.

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